73. The nucleic acid of claim 72, wherein said nucleic acid is selected from the group consisting of DNA and RNA.

74. The nucleic acid of claim 72, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 22 or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

75. The nucleic acid of claim 72 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 22 or its complement.

76. The nucleic acid of claim 74 wherein the nucleic acid encodes a mature form of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence that is SEQ ID NO: 22.

77. The nucleic acid of claim 75 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 22, a mutant or variant thereof.

78. An oligonucleotide sequence that is complementary to and hybridizes under stringent conditions with the nucleic acid of claim 72, a variant or mutant thereof.

79. The oligonucleotide sequence of claim 78 which is complementary to at least a portion of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 21, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

80. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence complementary to at least a portion of a nucleic acid according to claim 74.

81. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 72.

82. A cell comprising the vector of claim 81.

29 ~~83~~. The cell of claim 82 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO: 21, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

30 ~~84~~. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~ 18 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

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31 ~~85~~. A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~ 18, said process comprising:

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a) providing the cell of claim ~~82~~ 28;

b) culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and

c) recovering said polypeptide,

thereby producing said polypeptide.

32 ~~86~~. The process of claim ~~85~~ 31 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.

33 ~~87~~. A process for identifying a compound that binds the nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~ 18, the process comprising:

a) contacting said nucleic acid with a compound; and

b) determining whether said compound binds said nucleic acid sequence.

34 ~~88~~. The compound identified by the process of claim ~~87~~ 33.--